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AUTHOR Heskett, Eldon; Sherrill, Don
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ABSTRACT

The paper describes a framework for assessing students with suspected learning or behavior problems. The process is outlined in sequences which are designed to guide staff from the point of identification to the point where an alternative program may be recommended. Each sequence is described in terms of a step title, a description of procedures to be taken in the step, documentation procedures for the step, and question(s) to be answered before proceeding to the next step. The framework is intended to provide structure for making a "least-biased" assessment using a multidisciplinary team approach. Steps include documenting educational performance; contacting parents; conducting staffings; preparing and conducting an assessment; preparing assessment reports; forming an admissions, review, and dismissal committee; developing and approving Individual Education Programs; making placement decisions; and periodically evaluating student progress. Extensive appendixes include sample forms and procedural information for the admissions, review and dismissal committee. (CL)

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INDIVIDUAL STUDENT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Lincoln Public Schools

1982-83

Department of Student Services
Department of Special Education

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*This process has been adapted for Lincoln Public Schools from a model developed by James A. Tucker, Ph.D., called "Nineteen Steps for Assuring Nonbiased Placement of Students in Special Education". The assessment process was developed through a grant from the Nebraska State Department of Education (P.L. 94-142, #80-55-001-201). Permission to reproduce this document should be requested of the Director of Student Services - Lincoln Public Schools.

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INTRODUCTION

This process provides a framework for making a structured, least-biased assessment of a student whose educational performance and/or behavior seems to be significantly different from those in the peer group. This process is designed for use by all staff who, after making the normal day-to-day adjustments in the student's learning materials and environment, feel that their efforts have not been successful in helping the student.

By following the process, the referring staff member is using a multidisciplinary team approach to problem solving. In this team, teachers, parents*, administrators and support service personnel work together to design the optimal education program for the student.

There are four basic assumptions underlying the process:

1. Students assisted by this process are currently in a school program or are referred for pre-school program.

2. The regular classroom and curricula are the frame of reference for this process.

3. A staff member is designated at each building to coordinate the process.

4. There may be behavioral situations** involving a student which may necessitate omitting the earlier steps of this process.

The process is structured into a sequence (steps) which guide staff from the point of identification about the student's educational performance to the point where an alternative program may be recommended. Information about the student is collected at each step of the process and used in evaluating the student's performance and program from the least-biased perspective.

Each step in the process is set forth in a format which includes:

1. a step title
2. a description of procedures to be taken in the step
3. documentation procedures for the step
4. a "Step Question(s)" to be answered before proceeding to the next step in the process

Each "step question" is a "Yes" or "No" question. The answer will either provide recommendations for intervention strategies in regular education, refer to an earlier step, or lead to the next step in the process.

There are two points that need attention as one proceeds through the steps of the process; (1) "assessing" or "labeling" a student prior to the completion of assessment activities.

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*Parents: Defined as both natural and adoptive parents and legal guardians.

**Behavioral Situations: Behavior serious enough to warrant suspension is sufficient reason for omitting the first few steps of this process. If a student is suspended, due process procedures must be followed. As a result of suspension, the student may be referred for assessment.

Statements to parents or other professionals concerning the possibility of a student's being handicapped or qualifying for the gifted program may cause undue anxiety or expectations and may bias data as it is collected. It is only after a comprehensive assessment is completed and the data analyzed that labels of any kind should be discussed.

(2) Role of parents. It is the responsibility of school staff to communicate progress to parents, solicit their participation and suggestions and take any other steps necessary for parental involvement in the process.

Forms for documenting and tracking this process are found in Appendix A. A glossary of the terms used in this process are found in Appendix B.

The Assessment process begins when the teacher asks the question:

QUESTION: IS THERE SOMETHING ABOUT THE STUDENT'S EDUCATION PERFORMANCE THAT CONCERNS THE TEACHER?

If the answer is "yes", proceed to Step 1.

STEP 1: TEACHER DESCRIBES AND DOCUMENTS EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE

The teacher writes a description of a student whose educational performance and/or behavior appears to be significantly different from the peer group. The teacher's description stated in observable/measurable terms and includes:

1. WHO is performing the behavior(s)
2. WHAT is the student doing
3. WHERE is the behavior(s) taking place
4. WHEN is the student exhibiting the behavior(s) including the concepts of frequency of occurrences and duration of time.

The identification of the student's educational performance could be in one or more of the following areas:

1. Academic Achievement (learning problem)
2. Social Behavior (discipline)
3. Physical Development (hearing, vision, medical)
4. Speech and/or language development*

The teacher reviews the student's file and collects data about the student. The data collected will vary depending on the nature of the educational performance. Examples of data are: student grades, achievement tests, daily work samples, behavioral observations, attendance. If data is inconclusive, the teacher should continue to observe the student to collect more data.

The description and data is compiled in a sequential manner and is noted on the Student Contact Sheet. Attach original data to the Student Contact Sheet.

QUESTION: DOES THE DATA SUGGEST THAT THE STUDENT'S EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE AND/OR BEHAVIOR IS SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT FROM THE PEER GROUP?

If the answer is "No", the teacher documents the reason and concludes the process.
If the answer is "Yes", proceed to Step 2.

* See speech/language checklist in Appendix C.

STEP 2: TEACHER CONTACTS STUDENT'S PARENT(S)

The teacher who has described the student's educational performance should be the person to contact the student's parent(s). Contact may be by phone or personal conference. If parents cannot be personally contacted, a letter is sent.

The purpose of parent contact is:

1. To share the teacher's observations and what has been done to help the student and to gain parent(s) understanding and support.

2. To inform parent(s) that the teacher may be consulting with other staff in the building for additional ideas for strategies.

3. To involve parent(s) in generating ideas related to the teacher's observations.

In the conversation with parent(s), the teacher summarizes any agreed-upon strategies to be used with the student. If strategies have not evolved during the conversation, the teacher agrees to contact the parent(s) after a plan has been developed.

The teacher writes a summary of the parent-teacher conference on the **Student Contact Sheet** including strategies agreed upon by the teacher and parent(s).

If, after reasonable effort, the teacher is unable to contact the student's parent(s), the teacher documents attempts and dates on the **Student Contact Sheet**. A written notice is sent to the student's parent(s) stating the concern and what the teacher intends to do.

QUESTION: DOES THE INFORMATION FROM PARENT-TEACHER CONTACT SUGGEST A NEED FOR FURTHER STRATEGIES?

If the answer is "No", the teacher documents the reason on the **Student Contact Sheet**, and concludes the process.
If the answer is "Yes", proceed to Step 3.

STEP 3: TEACHER/PARENT(S) IMPLEMENT AND EVALUATE STRATEGIES

The teacher and/or parent(s) implement agreed-upon strategies to help the student in the regular classroom. If the teacher and parent(s) were unable to develop strategies, the teacher proceeds to develop a plan which may be shared later with the student's parent(s).

When developing strategies, the teacher may consult other staff members for strategies to help the student. This is done informally using any of the resources in the building; such as, team leaders, other teachers, reading specialists, principals, coordinators, resource teachers and student services coordinator.

Timelines on suggested strategies are determined by the teacher and, if appropriate, the student's parent(s). Strategies should be implemented long enough to allow sufficient time for the strategies to take effect.

During the strategy implementation period, the teacher and/or parent monitors the student's performance and evaluates progress. The teacher documents the student's progress. The following information should be included:

1. A description of the strategies.
2. Data which indicate the student's progress or lack of progress under the strategies.
3. Statements evaluating the effectiveness of the strategies.
4. Recommendations for further action.
5. Documentation of parental contact to discuss the outcome of the strategies and, if appropriate, notification that teacher plans to refer the student for staffing.

QUESTION: DID IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIES RESOLVE CONCERN ABOUT THE STUDENT'S EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE?

If "No", the teacher documents the reason and proceeds to Step 4.
If "Yes", the teacher documents and concludes the process.

STEP 4: STAFFING

To Facilitate the Staffing Process:

1. The teacher brings all data to the person coordinating the process in the building.

2. The designated cordinator will schedule and chair the staffing.

   Models for staffing a student will vary according to school preference and resources. A staffing team may consist of the principal, referring teacher, the staff member designated to coordinate the process and any other staff requested by the coordinator.

The purpose of Staffing is:

1. To share with others in the building the teacher's concerns and what strategies have been tried in the classroom to meet the educational needs of the student.

2. To explore out-of-classroom resources in the building which might help the student.

3. To determine all available out-of-classroom resources.

The staffing team should:

1. Review and analyze the data on the Student Contact Sheet. If data is judged insufficient, designation is made of what needs to be collected and who is responsible for collecting the data.

2. Decide what resources should be tried to help the student. Staff responsible for delivering and evaluating the resources are designated.* Student's progress is documented on the Student Contact Sheet.

3. Determine a timeline within which resources will be tried as well as a progress review date.

On the progress review date, the staffing team should decide to:

1. continue the out-of-classroom, building resources or

2. try other out-of-classroom alternatives or

3. refer the student for disciplinary due process procedures or,

4. refer the student to the Building Multidisciplinary Assessment Team (BMAT) for a comprehensive assessment.

   If the decision is to refer the student for a comprehensive assessment, the Staffing team should develop Assessment Questions to be answered during the comprehensive assessment. At the staffing the team should recommend those members who will make up the Building Multidisciplinary Assessment Team (BMAT) for a comprehensive assessment. The assessment questions are recorded on the **Assessment Form** and this becomes the official referral.

QUESTION: HAS THE STAFFING GROUP DECIDED TO REFER THE STUDENT FOR COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT?

If the answer is "No", the decision is documented and the process concludes.
If the answer is "Yes", continue with Step 5.

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*Special Education services are not considered a "regular education, in-building alternative". A student may not be assigned to Special Education on a regular basis without a comprehensive assessment and verification that the student is handicapped. Special Education staff may be used as a consultative resource to building staff.

STEP 5: **BUILDING MULTIDISCIPLINARY ASSESSMENT TEAM (BMAT) PREPARES ASSESSMENT PLAN**

Prior to the assessment team's meeting to prepare an assessment plan, several tasks are completed by the coordinator:

1. A check is made to ensure all four (4) prior steps have been taken and documented.

2. Assessment Questions the staff wish to have answered by the assessment have been collected.

3. If the Building Multidisciplinary Assessment Team (BMAT) has not been assigned (e.g., at Staffing in Step 4), members must be selected. Staff most likely to perform the assessment measures that will answer the assessment questions are chosen. Teachers, audiologists, psychologists, resource teachers, speech pathologists, physical/occupational therapists are among those who might serve on assessment teams.

The coordinator is responsible for scheduling the BMAT and ensuring that all data is available.

Under the direction of the coordinator, the BMAT performs the following tasks:

1. reviews all data.

2. reviews the Assessment Questions of the building staff.

3. generates additional Assessment Questions if necessary.

4. determines

   the most appropriate person(s) to answer specific Assessment Questions and agrees upon the procedures to be used to answer in Assessment.

5. determines the need for additional BMAT members if necessary.

Decisions of the BMAT are recorded on the **Assessment Form** and includes the following:

a. BMAT membership
b. Assessment Questions
c. Persons responsible for answering each Assessment Question
d. Date on which BMAT will reconvene to share their assessment data

*(Some students may have unique characteristics (e.g., non-English speaking, non-oral communication, limited hearing/vision, high anxiety levels, minority racial membership) which may necessitate special adjustments in assessment procedures. The team must consider the effect that ethnic, cultural and unique population characteristics may have on assessment findings and select the appropriate tests/instruments for assessing the student.)

A BMAT representative is assigned to explain to the admission, review and dismissal (ARD) committee any adjustments in the assessment process designed to eliminate the possibility of bias.*

Before the assessment team can begin their assessment, the coordinator completes the Parent/Guardian Permission for Evaluation Form. The parent(s) signature is obtained on this form.

When the signed permission form is on file, the BMAT members are notified. If parent(s) refuse permission for evaluation the Director of Student Services is notified.

QUESTIONS: HAVE ALL THE ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS BEEN GENERATED AND ASSIGNED TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE BUILDING MULTI-DISCIPLINARY ASSESSMENT TEAM (BMAT)?

If the answer is "no", identify additional Assessment Questions and make appropriate assignments.

HAS THE PARENT SIGNED THE PERMISSION FOR EVALUATION FORM?

If the answer is "no", and the parent(s) refuse to sign, refer to Director of Student Services.
If the answer is "Yes", proceed to Step 6.

STEP 6: **BUILDING MULTIDISCIPLINARY ASSESSMENT TEAM (BMAT) CONDUCTS ASSESSMENT**

The purpose of the student assessment is to collect data which will:

1. answer the Assessment Questions
2. describe student's strengths and needs
3. provide data for educational programming

Members of the BMAT collect data that will answer the Assessment Questions assigned to them at Step 5. Data collected will be determined by the content of the Assessment Questions, but will generally fall into one or more of the following basic categories:

1. Educational history
2. Sociological history
3. Child development
4. Educational achievement
5. Data on intellectual functioning
6. Adaptive behavior
7. Medical information
8. Social/emotional functioning
9. Sensory-motor skills
10. Classroom behavior
11. Prevocational/vocational skills
12. Speech/language functioning

Methods used to collect assessment data will vary depending on the judgment of the BMAT. Frequently used methods may include:

1. Classroom observations/informal assessment
2. Individualized assessment: standardized and criterion-referenced

3. Curriculum based assessment

4. Formal and informal measures of adaptive behavior

5. Interviews: with teachers, student, parent(s)

6. Student record reviews

Each BMAT member notes of the assessment. These notes form the basis of the **Integrated Assessment Report.** These notes should contain the following:

1. Answers to the Assessment Questions.

2. Any additional questions raised and answered during the assessment process.

3. The methods used to answer the Assessment Questions.

QUESTION: HAS ALL THE DATA NECESSARY TO ANSWER THE ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS BEEN GATHERED?

If the answer is "no", return to Step 5 for additional data.
If the answer is "Yes", proceed to Step 7.

STEP 7: **BUILDING MULTIDISCIPLINARY ASSESSMENT TEAM (BMAT) PREPARES INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT REPORT**

The coordinator of the assessment process chairs the BMAT meeting. The BMAT performs the following:

1. Selects one member to complete the **Integrated Assessment Report Form**. This will be the only report written. This person should present the **Integrated Assessment Report** at the Admissions, Review and Dismissal (ARD) meeting.

2. Shares the notes of the assessment.

3. Reviews assessment results to determine the content and recommendations of the **Integrated Assessment Report**

4. If the BMAT determines that the student functions within normal range or is experiencing educational/behavior difficulties not related to a handicapping condition, the assessment team writes the **Integrated Assessment Report** to reflect this position. The report should recommend resources/techniques to be delivered through regular education.

5. If the assessment data indicates that the student may be handicapped, the BMAT compares assessment data to Verification Criteria for the suspected handicapping condition and includes this data in the **Integrated Assessment Report.**

6. If the team is unable to reach agreement on qualification or verification, the dissenting team member(s) sends a **Minority Report** to the principal within ten (10) school days. The principal sends the report to the Director of Student Services who reviews the **Minority Report Form** as well as statements of the Multidisciplinary Assessment Team member to:

   (1) affirm the majority decision or

   (2) affirm the minority decision and determine further action.

After the **Integrated Assessment Report** is typed in final copy, BMAT members sign the report. It is sent to the building principal. A member of BMAT shares findings and recommendations with the parents and school staff. If the student's parent(s) disagree with the **Integrated Assessment Report**, the principal should notify the Director of Student Services for further action. A copy of the **Integrated Assessment Report** is made available to the parents on request.

An ARD meeting must be held within thirty days after completion of the **Integrated Assessment Report.**

When the findings are shared with the parents, the parents have the option of:

1. accepting the findings and consider as discussed placement in Step 8 or,

2. requesting postponement of placement until a later date.

Before considering placement in a special education program the parents must be advised of their rights.

If option 1 of Step 7 is followed, ther coordinator advises the parents of their rights by completing the **Notice to Inititate or Change Education Placement/Program** form and reviewing the **Identification & Placemnt Procedures: A guide for Parents.**

If option 2 is used, the notice form and guide for parents is sent by U. S. mail.

QUESTION: IS THE STUDENT VERIFIED AS HANDICAPPED?

If the answer is "No", the process concludes and recommendations from the **Integrated Assessment Report** are carried out in the regular education program. If the answer is "Yes", continue with Step 8.

STEP 8: ADMISSIONS, REVIEW AND DISMISSAL (ARD) COMMITTEE IS FORMED

The coordinator chairs the Admissions, Review and Dismissal (ARD) meeting. ARD procedures are included in Appendix D. Steps 8 through 12 are all completed at the ARD meeting.

The ARD committee should consist of the following people:*

1. a building representative (other than the student's teacher)
2. one or both parent(s)
3. student's teacher(s)
4. at least one member of the Building Multidisciplinary Assessment Team (BMAT)
5. the student, if appropriate
6. other individuals, at the discretion of the parent(s) or school district may attend the ARD meeting.

QUESTION: ARE ALL TEAM MEMBERS PREPARED FOR THE ADMISSIONS, REVIEW AND DISMISSAL (ARD) MEETING?

If the answers are "No," the coordinator reschedules the meeting.
If the answers are "Yes," proceed to Step 9.

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*Speech/Language Impaired: The ARD team for a student verified as speech/language impaired may be limited to the speech clinician and the student's parent(s). It is recommended that the student's teacher(s) also be involved.

STEP 9: **ADMISSIONS, REVIEW AND DISMISSAL (ARD) COMMITTEE DETERMINES STUDENT'S NEED FOR PLACEMENT IN SPECIAL PROGRAM**

To establish the student's need for placement in Special Education, the ARD committee agrees that the assessment data include:

1. **the student is handicapped.**

   The BMAT representative(s) presents the rationale for verifying the student as handicapped. The ARD members may ask for clarification of data used as a basis for verification and may request that additional data be collected if they feel that the present data is inconclusive.

2. **student's difficulties are related to the handicapping condition.**

   Assessment data must show a relationship between the student's educational programming needs and the verified handicapping condition.

3. **student needs Special Education and/or Related Services.**

   Judgment must be made that Special Education and/or Related Services are necessary. This is a separate consideration since there are some verified handicapped students who function independently in regular education without supplemental support services from Special Education. Verification as handicapped does not automatically qualify a student for placement in Special Education.

   Placement is the responsibility of the Admissions, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee. Placement decisions cannot be made until the BMAT has reached a unanimous decision or, in the case of filing of a **Minority Report**, until the Director of Student Services has reached a decision which verifies the student as handicapped.

4. If agreement on eligibility cannot be reached, the principal contacts the Director of Student Services.

QUESTION: **IS THERE A NEED FOR PLACEMENT IN SPECIAL EDUCATION?**

If the answer is "No", complete the ARD form with parent(s) signature indicating the student does not need special education. Implement the recommendations from the **Integrated Assessment Report.** If the student does not need special education, the I.E.P. does not need to be completed.
If the answer is "Yes", proceed to Step 10.

The parents may appeal either decision to the Director of Student Services.

STEP 10: **ADMISSIONS, REVIEW AND DISMISSAL (ARD) COMMITTEE CHECKS ETHNIC, CULTURAL AND UNIQUE POPULATION CONSIDERATIONS**

The BMAT representative(s) explains any adjustments made during assessment to eliminate the possibility of ethnic, cultural or unique population bias.

The ARD committee should be in agreement that factors used to indicate the presence of a handicapping condition cannot be completely accounted for by the student's differences in language, culture and/or lack of educational opportunity.

QUESTION: **ARE ELIGIBILITY DECISIONS FREE FROM CULTURAL, ETHNIC AND UNIQUE POPULATION BIAS?**

If the answer is "No", return to Step 5 and review/revise the assessment plan.
If the answer is "Yes", proceed to Step 11.

STEP 11: **ADMISSIONS, REVIEW AND DISMISSAL (ARD) COMMITTEE DEVELOPS AND APPROVES INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)**

The ARD committee reaches agreement on the contents of the student's **Individual Education Program** (IEP).

ARD committee agreeement on an IEP is reached through unanimous approval of parent and school district staff. if school district staff disagree, the majority rule applies.

School staff have several alternatives when parents are reluctant or refuse to sign IEPs.

> Encourage parents to approve those areas of the IEP with which they DO agree. When parents are willing to approve areas of an IEP, they may initial those areas to document their approval.
>
> A statement should be added to the IEP and might read, "I/we have initialed those areas of this document with which we agree. Those areas not initialled remain to be resolved. Signed /s/ Betty Jones, mother; /s/ Frank Jones, father."
>
> Attempt to work out an interim arrangement until disagreements are resolved. Document interim arrangements.

When the ARD committee completes the IEP, staff members and parents sign the IEP form indicating agreement.

If parents refuse to approve the entire IEP, the principal notifies the Director of Student Services.

QUESTION: **HAVE PARENT(S) (STUDENT 19 OR OVER) APPROVED AND SIGNED THE IEP?**

If the answer is "No", (parents refuse to sign entire IEP) the principal notifies the Director of Student Services.
If the answer is "Yes", proceed to Step 12.

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*A student 19 years old and not under legal guardianship must approve or disapprove the IEP.

STEP 12: ADMISSIONS, REVIEW AND DISMISSAL (ARD) COMMITTEE MAKES PLACEMENT DECISION

The ARD committee considers educational options within which the specified Individual Education Program (IEP) services will be provided to the student.

1. Regular Classroom: with special accommodations.

2. Regular Classroom: with supplementary/adapted instruction.

3. Resource Program: with student receiving service from special education building resource person and/or in special education resource center.

4. Special Class: with student assigned to a special education class and programmed into regular education, when appropriate.

5. Homebound/ Contract: with student being served by LPS personnel in home or hospital or with LPS contracting with another agency for services.

"When a verified handicapped student is placed in a special class program, the school district must document that a less restrictive placement was considered and was deemed inappropriate because, even with special aides and services, the handicapped student would not benefit from a regular education program." Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (paraphrased).

Documentation can be accomplished by listing the less restrictive placement(s) considered, even with the use of special aides and services. Beginning immediately, documentation of the above information should be made on the following forms:

1. Initial placement--on the Admissions, Review and Dismissal (ARD) form. Document in item number 3.

2. Continued placement--on the Individual Education Program (IEP) form. Document on final page.

The student's verified handicapping condition should not necessarily determine the type of educational program into which the student is placed. The IEP should determine the student's educational program.

Placement decisions of the ARD committee are documented by completing the ARD form.

QUESTION: HAVE STUDENT'S PARENT(S) (STUDENT 19 YEARS OR OVER) APPROVED THE PLACEMENT DECISION?

If the answer is "No", the principal contacts the Director of Student Services.
If the answer is "Yes", proceed to Step 13.

STEP 13: SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REGULAR EDUCATION STAFF PROVIDE INSTRUCTION AND/OR RELATED SERVICES

Special Education and related services in the student's IEP will be provided immediately after the IEP is finalized. Exceptions for any delay include:

1. when meetings occur during periods when students are not in school (e.g., summer, vacation, etc.)

2. when there are circumstances which require a short delay, such as making transportation arrangements.

QUESTION: IS THE AGREED UPON PROGRAM BEING PROVIDED?

If the answer is "No", return to Steps 11 and 12.
If the answer is "Yes", proceed to Step 14.

STEP 14: STAFF PERIODICALLY EVALUATES STUDENT'S PROGRESS

Staff periodically evaluates the student's progress towards mastery of the short-term objectives on the student's Individual Education Program (IEP).

Meeting dates for reviewing the IEP with the student's parent(s) are not required to be stated in the IEP. There are, however, specific provisions regarding the school's responsibilities in initiating IEP meetings.

1. The school must hold meetings periodically, but not less than annually, to review and, if appropriate, revise each student's IEP.*

2. There should be as many meetings a year as the student needs.

3. Schools should grant reasonable parental request for an IEP meeting.

4. IEP evaluations should coincide with the district's general reporting procedures for all students.

Comprehensive assessment of a Special Education student must occur once every three (3) years. Comprehensive assessment includes Steps 5 through 14.

QUESTION: IS THE STUDENT MAKING SATISFACTORY PROGRESS?

If the answer is "No", the IEP manager requests the ARD committee to review the appropriateness of the IEP's goals and objectives. If the answer is "Yes", continue with the present program.

DO ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES SUPPORT CONTINUED PLACEMENT IN SPECIAL EDUCATION?

If the answer is "No", the student is dismissed from Special Education by the ARD committee. Dismissal should be documented in the IEP with parent's signature.
If the answer is "Yes", return to Step 11.

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*Nebraska Department of Education Rule 54 requires review of pre-school children more frequently: each quarter for children less than three (3) years of age; each semester for children age three (3) and older.

APPENDIX A

526967

For Use In Steps 1-4

LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Department of Student Services
Lincoln Public Schools
Lincoln, Nebraska

DOCUMENTATION LOG

Student Name School Teacher/Staff

The purpose of this documentation log is to record objective information that would be helpful as you work with this student. This information will also be useful to others who may work with this student.

Describe your observations by including the following information in brief, factual statements:

1. Who is involved
2. When it happened(s)
3. Where it happened (s)
4. What was observed
5. What you did
6. Your initials and the date

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For Use In Step 5

LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Department of Student Services
Lincoln Public Schools
Lincoln, Nebraska

BUILDING MULTIDISCIPLINARY ASSESSMENT TEAM (BMAT) ASSESSMENT PLAN

Date _____ School _____

Student's Name	I D Number	Sex	Grade	Birthdate

Parent/Guardian's Name	Address	Phone

Referring Person(s) _____

*** To Be Completed By Referring Person(s) * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * ***

Statement: Using the Documentation Log, briefly describe your concern(s).

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

*** To Be Completed At The BMAT ***

Assessment Questions: Information needed about the student in order to resolve the concern(s) stated above.	Person Responsible

5/82

526785
Rev. 5-82

For use in Step 5

PARENT/GUARDIAN PERMISSION FOR STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Lincoln Public Schools
Lincoln, Nebraska

SCHOOL _____ DATE _____

Lincoln Public Schools would like to provide an assessment for _____
(Student's Name)

to assist in planning and providing educational services and/or programs appropriate to his/her needs. We believe this assessment should be conducted for the following reasons: _____

_____

In general this assessment would include: _____

_____

_____

The assessment would be conducted by: _____

_____
Title(s) of person(s) involved in the assessment

It is important that you be aware and understand that you have the following rights: (1) To review all records related to the referral for this assessment; (2) To review the procedures used in the assessment; (3) To refuse permission for the assessment; (4) To be informed of the results of the assessment and (5) To have an assessment conducted by a person or agency other than the public schools; however the expense for this assessment will be paid for by the parent/guardian.

So that we may know your decision, please CHECK ONE of the boxes below, sign this form and return it to the school as soon as possible.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

_____
Principal

. . . . . .

☐ Permission is given to conduct the assessment as described.

☐ I do not give permission to conduct the assessment.

_____ _____
Parent/Guardian Signature Date

For use in Step 7

LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Department of Student Services

FORMAT FOR BMAT INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT REPORT

I. Date_____ School_____

Student's Name	I D Number	Sex	Grade	Birthdate

Parent/Guardian's Name	Address	Phone

II. Statement of concern from BMAT Assessment Plan.

III. Signatures of BMAT members.*	Agree	Disagree

IV. Assessment questions (from BMAT Assessment Plan) and findings. (Include methods, information which relates to remediation of concern, information useful in writing I.E.P.).

Question 1_____

Findings:_____

Question 2_____

Findings:_____

V. Verification questions (only if necessary)

Question 1_____

Findings:_____

Question 2_____

Findings:_____

VI. Recommendations to meet student's instructional needs (synthesis of/conclusions drawn from above findings).

*BMAT member(s) disagreeing with the report must file a minority report within ten (10) school days.

5/82

For use in Step 8

526091
8/82

NOTICE TO INITIATE OR CHANGE EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENT/PROGRAM

Lincoln Public Schools
Lincoln, Nebraska

Student Name _____ **Student No.** _____

School _____ **Date of Notice** _____ **19** ____

A review of educational and other assessments of your child, indicate that _____ is eligible for a special education program or service. You are invited to attend a conference with our Admissions, Review and Dismissal Committee. This conference will: (a) explain why the school is proposing a special program; (b) review the assessment information used as a basis for the proposed program; (c) review educational options the school considered and the reasons for acceptance or rejection of those options; and (d) review any other information which is important to your child's education.

In order to provide a special education program/service to your child, an Individual Education Program (IEP) must be developed. The school district must also determine your approval or disapproval of the proposed educational program/service.

Enclosed with this notice is a description of your rights. The enclosed brochure is entitled *Identification and Placement Procedures: A Guide for Parents.*

The meeting will be held on _____ 19 ____ at _____ a.m./p.m.

Place of Meeting _____

School district personnel attending the meeting include:

Name	Title
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Should you be unable to attend this meeting, please notify the school principal. Thank you.

_____
Name

_____
Title

White copy to student's cumulative file
Yellow copy to parents

526282

LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Signatures of Program Developers
(Complete this section on page one only)
Date Signed _____

Student Number _____
Student's Name _____
School _____ Birthdate ___/___/___
Present level of educational performance in _____ area
(should include any available test and assessment information.) _____

_____ IEP Manager
_____ Principal or Designee
_____ Parent/Guardian Approve ☐

Goal(s)	Measurable Objectives, Person Responsible	Special Instr. Materials/Media	Dates, Evaluation Comments

Extent of participation in regular class _____

Amount of time for Special Education and/or related services _____

32

PROGRAM
(Mark Box)

☐ Gifted
☐ Title I
☐ Headstart
☐ Special Education
Program _____

RELATED SERVICES NEEDED

		Beginning & Ending Dates
☐	Transportation	_____ _____
*☐	_____	_____ _____
*☐	_____	_____ _____
*☐	_____	_____ _____

*If checked, goals and objectives must be developed.

White copy to student's cumulative file — Yellow copy to parents — Pink copy to IEP Manager

33

526092
8/82

For use in Step 12

REPORT OF ACTIONS BY ADMISSIONS, REVIEW AND DISMISSAL COMMITTEE (ARD)

Lincoln Public Schools
Lincoln, Nebraska

(check which) _____ Building ARD _____ Central ARD _____ District ARD

1. Student Name _____ Student No. _____ Grade _____

   School/Agency _____ Date of Meeting _____

2. Eligibility: Primary Handicapping Condition _____

   Accompanying Handicapping Condition(s) (if present) _____

   _____ _____

3. Alternate Program Options Considered _____

   _____

   Reason for Rejection _____

   _____

4. Date of current Individual Education Program (IEP) _____

5.

Signature of Persons Present	**Relationship to Student**
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

6. ARD/IEP TEAM RECOMMENDATION

   A. Placement in the program(s) for _____

   _____ , _____

   B. Placement in the related service(s) of _____

   _____ as a result of recommended assessments.

   C. Dismissal from _____ . The student is no longer in need of the service.

   D. Refer to District ARD (Director of Student Services). Date referred _____

7. I AGREE with the contents of the proposed IEP and with the ARD/IEP team recommendation. I have been informed of my rights. I understand that I have the right to review my child's records and to request a change in placement at any time. I HAVE _____/HAVE NOT _____ participated in the development of my child's IEP.

   _____ _____
   Parent/Guardian Signature Date

OR

I DO NOT AGREE with the contents of the proposed IEP and with the ARD/IEP team recommendation. I have been informed of my rights. I understand that I have the right to review my child's records and to request a change in placement at any time. I understand that I have the right to refuse this permission and to have my child continue in the present placement pending further action. I HAVE _____/HAVE NOT _____ participated in the development of my child's IEP.

_____ _____
Parent/Guardian Signature Date

White copy to Director of Student Services; Yellow copy to student's file; Pink copy to parents

For use in Step 14

526101
8/82

REQUEST FOR PARENT/GUARDIAN PARTICIPATION IN IEP PLANNING MEETING

Lincoln Public Schools
Lincoln, Nebraska

Date _____ 19____

Dear Parent/Guardian:

You are invited to attend a conference concerning your child, _____ .

At this conference, you and the school staff will plan your child's Individual Education Program (IEP) for the next year. School district staff attending the meeting include:

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

During the school year, you and the school staff will evaluate your child's progress in meeting the goals set in the IEP.

Your comments and suggestions are valuable in forming your child's next Individual Education Program (IEP). A form is enclosed with this letter. The form is titled "Parent/Guardian Comments —Individual Education Program." We would appreciate your comments; please write them on the form and return to the school immediately. If it is more convenient, you may bring the form to school and complete your comments with the school staff.

If you do not respond to this letter within ten (10) school days, we will hold an IEP planning meeting in your absence.

Please check below in which way you want to participate in the conference. **Return this letter to the school principal immediately.**

_____
School Representative

_____
School

☐ I would like to have a conference to plan my child's Individual Education Program (IEP). I can be reached at the following telephone number(s):

Phone Number _____

Time _____

Phone Number _____

Time _____

or at the following address: _____

☐ I would like a telephone conference to plan my child's Individual Education Program (IEP). Please call me.

☐ I am unable to participate in the planning of my child's Individual Education Program (IEP).

Date _____ 19____ _____
Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date _____ 19____ _____

White copy to parents
Yellow copy to student's cumulative file

APPENDIX B

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ADMISSIONS, REVIEW AND DISMISSAL (ARD) COMMITTEE

A team or group of persons who review assessment results, complete a draft Individual Education Program (IEP) and recommend appropriate educational placement for a student. (Team makeup is described in Step 8.)

ALTERNATIVES

Instructional plans or programs designed to help those students who are not achieving at the same rate as the expected norm for the peer group.

ASSESSMENT

The objective evaluation of a student to determine particular strengths or needs. In addition to classroom techniques other instruments are used by diagnosticians who are trained in evaluation skills.

ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

A set of questions developed by staff members to determine a student's strengths or needs. The questions can be answered through techniques used by staff members and diagnosticians who are trained in assessment skills.

BUILDING MULTIDISCIPLINARY ASSESSMENT TEAM (BMAT)

A team or group or persons, including at least one of the student's classroom teachers or other specialist with knowledge in the area of suspected handicap. The team assesses a student and completes an integrated report.

CONTACT SHEET

A method used to document in a sequential manner a staff member's observation of a student's behavior. This documentation is kept in the student's file as part of the record keeping process.

COORDINATOR

A person at the building level who has been designated by the principal, and is assigned time to work with building and resource staff to facilitate the assessment and intervention process.

CRITERIA FOR HANDICAPPING CONDITION

A statement defining specific characteristics which must be exhibited during comprehensive assessment of a student in order to verify the student as handicapped.

DOCUMENTATION

The factual recording of a student's behavior as observed by a staff member. Behaviors are described in objective terms, the times of observation are noted and the staff member signs the notation. It is recommended that this be done on the Student Contact Sheet.

EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES

To devise a plan to achieve an instructional sequence or objective matched to the needs of the learner.

FILE

A systematic and organized accumulation of data pertaining to a student. The file is maintained in accordance with student record keeping procedures established by the Lincoln Public Schools.

FORMAL ASSESSMENT

The objective evaluation of a student using precise test instrument administered by a specially trained diagnostician.

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)

The Individual Education Program (IEP) is a written statement for a handicapped student that specifies the special education and related services necessary to assure the student a free, appropriate public education. The IEP is developed with and approved by the student's parents.

INFORMAL ASSESSMENT

The subjective evaluation of a student through general observation, classroom performance and instruments administered by non-resource personnel.

INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT REPORT

A compilation of all the data gathered during the assessment process. This report contains the findings and recommendations of all the staff who participated in the assessment. It is compiled in final form by the coordinator of the process and is the only report written about the student in the completion of the referral process.

LEAST BIASED ASSESSMENT

Testing materials and assessment procedures used for the purpose of assessment and placement of handicapped students must be selected and administered so as not to be socially or culturally discriminatory.

Students suspected of having a handicapped condition should not be "labeled" prior to a comprehensive assessment by BMAT.

MINORITY REPORT

If a staff member disagrees with the decision made by a BARD or CARD, a minority report is submitted to the Director of Student Services explaining the reason for the disagreement. The Director will make a decision on the minority report.

STAFFING

In-building personnel meet to share information about a student with particular needs. The staffing is an opportunity to: 1) evaluate the student, 2) develop alternatives or strategies, 3) determine the need for a comprehensive assessment.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special Education shall mean educational experiences and services through the use of special facilities and special adaptive classrooms, or either of the same to provide special instruction or the supportive resources necessary to assess, place and educate handicapped students in public schools.

VERIFICATION

A statement completed by the BMAT indicating whether or not the student qualifies as handicapped by definitions and criteria established by the Lincoln Public Schools' Special Education Department and the Nebraska Department of Education.

APPENDIX C

Steps 1-4

For students whose speech, language, voice and/or fluency appear to be significantly delayed or disorderd when compared to their peers in the classroom, the following guidelines may be followed:

Step 1. - The teacher describes and documents a concern or concerns in one or more of the communication areas by observing the student over a period of time and then completing the CHECKLIST TO DESCRIBE CONCERN ABOUT SPEECH-LANGUAGE-VOICE FLUENCY. This form may be obtained in each building from the Student Services Coordinator or the Speech/Language Pathologist.

The form allows the teacher to document the student's specific behavior of concern, where the behavior is taktng place and when it is taking place.

Question (as in Step 1)

If the answer is "NO," the teacher attaches the checklist to the Student Contact Sheet.

If the answer is "YES," continue to Step 2.

TEACHER CONTACTS PARENTS

Step 2 - The teacher should contact the student's parents by phone or conference to:

1. Share the observations of communication behavior that are of concern.
2. If practical discuss ideas for resolving the concern at home and/or in the student's class. There may or may not be helpful strategies available.
3. Inform the parents that the teacher may discuss the concern with the speech/language pathologist for additional suggestions that might be useful at home or in the classroom.

(Answer question 2 as written)

Speech-Language Pathologists may have handouts or "home-classroom" programs that could be helpful to some children without having to include them in therapy. Programs such as SWIRL, HERE'S HOW TO HANDLE "R", "S", "CH", etc., might be useful in some situations. These materials could be shared with parents and classroom teachers. Also, there may be instances when students with single phoneme articulation errors, assumed to be developmental in nature, could profit from having the teacher and parent simply focus on saying the error sound correctly and asking the child to say the sound or word after them. If the sound is present in the student's repertoire in its correct form, at least part of the time, the modeling approach as described is very likely to help the child improve the sound production and increase the number of occasions it is said correctly.

TEACHER/PARENT(S) IMPLEMENT AND EVALUATE STRATEGIES

Step 3 - as written but include:

If alternative strategies for students whose oral communication skills are of concern cannot be reasonably evolved between the teacher and parent, the teacher may proceed immediately to Step 4. In Step 4 the teacher proceeds to share the checklist with other members of the staffing team and follows the remaining Procedures for Student Assessment as necessary.

CHECKLIST TO DESCRIBE CONCERN ABOUT SPEECH-LANGUAGE-VOICE-FLUENCY

Student's Name _____ Grade _____ Age _____

Teacher _____ Dates of observation _____

Please check statements which best describe your concern about the student's communication skills.

Articulation:

_____ Substitutes one sound for another (e.g., "fumb" instead of "thumb"; "yamp/"lamp").

_____ Omits sounds (e.g., "tay" for "stay," "howe" for "house").

_____ Distorts sounds--the specific speech sound is not produced clearly. The sound is close to the actual sound but is not "quite right."

_____ Inserts extra sounds in words (e.g., "brrlue" instead of "blue."

_____ Speech is markedly delayed in comparison with that of his/her classmates.

_____ Speech in unintelligible.

_____ Avoids speaking in class.

_____ Has sound discrimination problems.

_____ Student seems aware of own speech errors.

_____ Articulation errors distract you from what he/she is saying.

Fluency:

_____ Student's speech is characterized by frequent repetitions of sounds, words or phrases, prolongations of sounds or "speech blocks."

_____ Student's speech is characterized by faulty rhythm.

_____ Student is concerned about non-fluent speech.

_____ Student's rate is so fast communication is interfered with.

_____ Student's fluency problems make it difficult to understand the content of speech.

_____ The student appears to avoid speaking in class.

_____ The student's verbal output is reduced considering his/her potential.

Language:

_____ Uses shorter sentences than his/her classmates.

_____ Uses fewer phrases and prepositions than his/her classmates.

_____ Misunderstands teacher's questions or instructions.

_____ Does better when given written instructions than when given oral instructions.

_____ Unable to associate common objects such as a dog with a bone.

_____ Becomes confused by conversation.

_____ Fails to name familiar objects.

Language (continued):

_____ Talks in disconnected phrases.

_____ Communicates with gestures and sounds.

_____ Speaks in single words or short phrases only.

_____ Uses words like "watchmacallit" or has strange words for common things within his/her experience.

_____ Has not developed good listening skills.

_____ Lacks a sense of humor or seems like he/she doesn't "get the joke."

_____ Does not express ideas spontaneously.

_____ Talks a lot, but has very little to say--"irrelevant chatter."

_____ Lacks adequate vocabularly.

_____ Has difficulty with relationships such as: opposite; part-whole; size; categorization; same-different; classification.

_____ Labels objects rather than relates objects when asked to tell a story about a picture.

_____ Has trouble answering open-ended questions.

Voice:

_____ Student loses voice by the end of or during the day.

_____ Voice consistently unpleasant (hoarse, harsh, breathy).

_____ Voice is higher or lower than ordinary for age and sex.

_____ Voice is monotonous.

_____ Voice is consistently too loud.

_____ Voice is difficult to hear.

_____ Student has obvious cleft in teeth ridge or palate.

_____ Voice is excessively nasal sounding (all sounds come through nose).

_____ Voice is lacking in nasality (student sounds as if they have a cold).

_____ Voice distracts from <u>what</u> the student is saying.

_____ Other students or listeners comment on the student's voice.

Other observations that may help describe concerns about the student's communication:

Parent contacted by phone _____ Personal conference _____ Date _____

Outcome:

ADMISSIONS, REVIEW AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES 1983-84

I. Initial Assessment and Placement

A. Verification

Building Multidisciplinary Assessment Team (BMAT) completes student assessment and verifies that student is handicapped.

B. Initial Placement-Parent Notification

For students who are assessed and verified as handicapped for the first time, parents should be sent the "Notice to Initiate or Change Educational Placement/Program" (form number 526091) and also the brochure entitled "Special Education Identification and Placement Procedures: A Guide for Parents".

C. In-Building Placement

Building Admissions, Review and Dismissal (BARD) Committee is held to develop an Individual Education Program (IEP). The BARD Committee will include local building principal or designee, referring teacher, receiving teacher, at least one member of the Building Multidisciplinary Assessment Team (BMAT), parents, and others invited by parents or school.

If a student is eligible for Special Education, placement is made in a Special Education program within the student's attendance center. (Unless student is obviously severely handicapped, student should be served in building Special Education Resource Program before considering placement in a Special Education Special Class program.)

D. Out-of-Building Placement

1. It is not necessary to hold a BARD if student is obviously severely handicapped and needs to be placed in a Special Education class program in another building. Instead, a Central Admissions Review and Dismissal (CARD) Committee should be held.

2. When a student is considered for a Special Education Special Class program available only in another building, a Central Admissions, Review and Dismissal (CARD) Committee develops the student's IEP. The CARD Committee will include parents, local building staff, a representative from the building housing the Special Education Special Class program (receiving building) and Central Office Special Education Consultant. A representative of the local building chairs the CARD meeting. The central office consultant should be notified well in advance of the CARD to review appropriateness of suggested placement.

3. When CARD approves the student's placement in a Special Education Special Class program in another building, the receiving principal designates date the student will enroll. Receiving principal notifies sending principal and Director of Special Education of enrollment date. The original copy of the CARD form is sent immediately to the Director of Student Services for processing. The Director of Special Education will arrange transportation and notify the sending principal of time schedules. A three-day waiting period is required for processing transportation requests.

E. Return to Original Building

When Special Education Special Class Program staff determine that a student appears ready to return to the original attendance center, a CARD is held at the Special Education Class building.

F. District ARD Committee

When a BARD or CARD Committee cannot reach agreement about placement, the chairperson may refer the matter to the Director of Student Services for further determination by the District Admissions Review and Dismissal (DARD) Committee.

G. Out-of-District/Non-Resident Placement

1. The DARD Committee is the only source for determining when students are placed in out-of-district programs (e.g., Nebraska Psychiatric Institute (NPI), Nebraska School for the Deaf, etc.).

2. The DARD Committee is the only source for placing non-resident students in Lincoln Public Schools Special Education programs.

H. Temporary Placement (30 Day Placement)

For the purpose of observation or assessment, the director of student services may make a temporary placement in a special education program not to exceed thirty (30) calendar days. Parents/guardian must give written approval of the temporary placement. An "interim" IEP may be developed which establishes the specific conditions and timelines for the temporary placement. An admissions, review and dismissal committee must develop an annual IEP on or before the end of the 30 calendar day temporary placement period. This procedure is often used for students who move into the district without accompanying assessment or placement data.

II. Reassessment and Continued Placement, Change of Placement or Dismissal

A. Reassessment Every Three Years

1. Each student receiving Special Education Services shall be reassessed at least every three years, or more frequently if conditions warrant. BMAT Team completes student assessment.

2. If student's handicapping condition does not change, only an integrated assessment report need be completed. Student's next Individual Education Program (IEP) indicates continued placement

B. Change (addition or deletion) of Handicapping Condition

1. If a student's handicapping condition is changed to another handicapping condition, an integrated assessment report and an ARD form is completed. Indicate any changes made in handicapping condition and any program changes on the forms.

2. If reassessment results in adding another verified handicapping condition to the previous handicapping condition, an integrated assessment report and an ARD form is completed. Indicate any changes on the forms. Indicate primary handicapping condition on ARD form.

C. Removal of Handicapping Condition

If reassessment results in removing a handicapped condition(s), an integrated assessment report is completed indicating that a handicapping condition(s) has been removed/no longer exists. When removal of a handicapping condition(s) results in dismissal from a Special Education Program, an ARD form is completed. If attempts to obtain parent signature are unsuccessful, a letter documenting dismissal and reason for dismissal is mailed. A copy of the letter is placed in the student's official record. When Special Education Students are graduated, an ARD form should be completed.